



United States Mission to the OSCE

Reply to Marcin Swiecicki, Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities

As delivered by Political Counselor Bruce Connuck
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
April 28, 2005

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you Mr. Swiecicki for your comprehensive report.

Our thanks go also to our Ukrainian hosts and to the organizers of the Third Preparatory Seminar in Kiev, which -- like its two predecessors -- was rich in substance and very well organized.

The task before us is to convert the substance from the Preparatory Seminars into a rich and useful Economic Forum in Prague.

We fully support the plan to target the discussions in Prague toward the policy level and to explore options for dealing with the broad range of issues posed by changing demographics, the influx of migrants, and the need to better integrate national minorities.

While understanding that there is no "one-size fits all" solution to any of these problems, we believe that presentations on various policy approaches could be useful in helping participating States devise their own solutions.

The United States hopes to contribute to this by offering case studies on our affirmative action and equal opportunity policies.

At the same time, we look forward to hearing how other countries are dealing with these issues. As we face common challenges, there is no need for each of us to re-invent the wheel; our collective experiences, good and bad, can help as we all try to develop the most appropriate policy responses for our own countries.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.